FGF-23 levels, these levels may be regarded as inappropriately high for the level of serum phosphate.

There is no consensus for management of HR, but most clinicians stop treatment when growth has terminated. Phosphate or calcitriol may improve symptoms, but could exacerbate ligamentous ossification. It is unknown whether bisphosphonates (PPI analogues) would confer protection from or accelerate ligament ossification. Bisphosphonates have benefit in some patients with GACI [10]. Whether correction of the bone biochemistry in adults with HR improves or worsens ectopic calcification remains an important management challenge.

Discussion statement: The authors have declared no conflicts of interest.

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Comment on: A multicentre study on the reliability of qualitative and quantitative nail-fold videocapillaroscopy assessment

Sir, Hofstee et al. [1] performed an important and useful study on the inter- and intra-observer reliability of both qualitative and quantitative parameters of nail-fold capillaroscopy in three centres. Using computer-based panoramic images, they showed an almost perfect inter- and intra-observer agreement for capillary density and presence of giant loops. This is an important finding, also found by others [2], as both capillaroscopic parameters are hallmarks of the so-called scleroderma pattern [3].

Nail-fold capillaroscopy is increasingly used in clinical practice, where the studies are merely performed by stereo microscope rather than by videocapillaroscopy. It should be reassuring to know that inter- and intra-observer agreement is also high in a routine situation of variability of image acquisition. This seemed to be the case unless the assessments were performed by experienced investigators. In a previous study, using the stereo microscope, the inter-observer agreement for the number of capillary loops per millimetre (in the distal row) in 120 randomly selected nail-fold photos of patients with Raynaud’s phenomenon was high (correlation coefficient 0.87). The inter-observer agreement for the presence of giant loops, being present in 17 of 120 photos, was high (96% of cases). In line with the study of Hofstee et al. [4] the so-called local paucities (vascularity)—bushy, widened and tortuous loops—showed a moderate to poor inter-observer agreement. The study of Hofstee
et al. [4] is a well-considered move in the standardization of capillaroscopic scoring systems.

International description of the patterns in terms of well-defined, simple and reliable parameters, including the definition of the distal row, is essential for research on the diagnostic significance in relation to organ involvement as well as response to therapy in connective tissue diseases, and subsequently for the interpretation of scoring of nail-fold capillary patterns in routine clinical practice.

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Comment on: A multicentre study on the reliability of qualitative and quantitative nail-fold videocapillaroscopy assessment: reply

Sr, we agree with Houtman [1] that there is a need for a simple scoring system for the assessment of nailfold images, based on reliable parameters. The purpose of our study [2] was therefore to gain more insight into the reliability of nailfold parameters using computer-based nailfold panorama mosaic images. We agree that (stereomicroscopy, at least until recently, has been more widely available in clinical practice than videocapillaroscopy. It is therefore reassuring and valuable to see that, at least in experienced hands, the inter- and intra-observer reliability of nailfold parameters using the stereomicroscope are in line with our study, although different statistical methods were used.

It is worth highlighting that in our study [2] some observers were experienced but others inexperienced (i.e. had no or very little previous experience with nailfold assessment). A key point in our study was the quantification (at high magnification) of abnormality across the whole nailbed, made possible with computerized software. The high magnification provides additional information and detail to that obtained using a stereomicroscope. Further studies are needed to further investigate the reliability and feasibility of the different imaging methods and a scoring system to be used for diagnostic and/or research purposes, although the likely selection of parameters has become clearer from recent studies.

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Comment on: Arthropathy with infiltrate IgG4-positive plasma cells in synovium

Sr, We read with interest the letter published in Rheumatology by Umekita et al. [1] regarding a case of